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Does Bible Prophecy Say North Korea Could Trigger World War III?

The Scriptures' detailed description of the next world war may surprise you.

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- [24-10-2017](#)

The North Korean crisis is boiling. As the nation makes rapid advances in its nuclear and missile programs, its leader is also making increasingly frequent, belligerent and specific threats to use those weapons against the United States and other targets. These developments—and U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to retaliate—have many onlookers concerned that the North Korean situation could soon erupt into World War III.

On August 9, the *National Interest* published a piece titled "How North Korea Could Start World War III."

A few days earlier, Catholic Online wrote, "North Korea may start World War III in days with attack on Guam."

In April, the *Independent* wrote, "With or without Donald Trump's help, Kim Jong-un could easily plunge the planet into its third world war inside a century."

Meanwhile, the hacktivist organization Anonymous published a video warning that a "globally devastating" World War III will erupt over the North Korean situation.

These are only a small sampling of the numerous analysts, pundits and observers who speculate that nuclear North Korea's aggression—and the reactions to it—could trigger a third world war.

Could These Predictions Be Right?

Are these analysts alarmists? Or will time prove them right? At the *Trumpet*, we examine such questions from a different vantage point than other publications. We view them through the lens of Bible prophecy.

One third of the Bible consists of prophecies, which are forecasts of the future. And a substantial portion of those prophecies describe details about World War III, what will trigger it, who the aggressors will be, what kinds of weapons they will use, and where decisive battles will occur. Prophecy also reveals how that war will end.

Sticks and Stones

Some 2,000 years ago, as they sat on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the disciples of Jesus Christ asked Him: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3).

"World" in this verse is a translation of the Greek word *aiōn*, which has a variety of meanings. In this context, it means "epoch" or "age." The disciples were asking Christ when the age of man ruling over himself would end, and when the age of Christ ruling over humanity would begin. They wanted to know what events would lead up to that seismic transition.

Jesus gave them a surprisingly detailed answer. He explained that prior to His return, religious deception would victimize

many (verses 4-5). He also said people would learn of “wars and rumours of wars,” fierce international tensions, and “famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes” (verses 6-7). These are all early warning indicators, but they do not mean the end of the age of man is imminent. Christ said, “[A]ll these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.”

In verses 21-22, Christ speaks of an event to occur that *does* signal the end of the age of man and show that His return is at the door: “For there will be greater anguish than at any time since the world began. And it will never be so great again. In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, not a single person will survive ...” (New Living Translation).

At the time that Christ spoke these alarming words, a global war that could threaten to kill every living person was not yet technologically possible.

During that era of Roman rule, warfare entailed hand-to-hand combat with weighted pila, spears and swords. The nearest thing to a weapon of mass destruction was a catapult, or maybe a skilled archer atop a war elephant. Even after another millennium had gone by, Genghis Khan’s forces were armed with similar weaponry: recurved bows, crossbows, sabers and trebuchets. With these, the Mongols slaughtered some 40 million people, which was 1 in 10 human beings alive at the time. By the 1400s, the arrival of gunpowder had led to widespread use of cannons and muskets. These advancements increased human beings’ efficiency in snuffing out other human beings. Yet humankind still could not spark a conflict where “not a single person” could survive.

With the First World War came major advances in weaponry. Killing was more efficient than ever before thanks to improved artillery and rifles, machine guns, land mines, poison gas, grenades, flamethrowers, tanks, bomb-dropping aircraft and torpedo-firing submarines. That conflict killed 18 million people. In World War II, mankind took a quantum leap into the future of killing devices: Some 60 million people were wiped out by vastly improved artillery, proximity fuses, radar, fighter jets, Essex-class carriers, rockets—and, most ominously, the two atomic bombs that concluded all the devastation.

Finally, around 1955, a major prophetic milestone was crossed: Increased prevalence of nuclear weapons made a *war capable of extinguishing all human life from the planet possible*—even dangerously probable.

Today, we continue to hold each other at nuclear gunpoint. This fact helps us see that many key Bible prophecies about World War III could only be possible in the modern nuclear age. This shows that the time of unprecedented destruction prophesied in Matthew 24:21-22 refers to what we would now call World War III.

Albert Einstein was presumably unfamiliar with these Bible passages, yet he understood that the advent of atomic weaponry would make the third world war unconscionably devastating.

“It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity,” he said. “I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.”

World War III’s Key Players

A related passage in Daniel 11 provides additional details about who the aggressors in this devastating, civilization-threatening world war will be.

First, there is the “king of the south” mentioned in verse 40. This power bloc is described as “pushing,” enacting an aggressive and violent foreign policy. Today, experts around the globe consistently label the Islamic Republic of Iran as the world’s number one state sponsor of terrorism. Sponsoring such sadistic behavior is among the most provocative or “pushy” strategies a nation could adopt and helps to identify the “king of the south” as radical Islam, led by Iran. Verses 42-43 show that, at the time when the third world war erupts, this Middle Eastern power will be in some level of partnership with Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. Also relevant is that the bulk of the radical Islamists in these and other territories that Iran influences lie largely to the south of Israel. (For thorough proof that the “king of the south” is modern Iran, please read *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry’s booklet [The King of the South](#).)

Daniel 11 also mentions the “king of the north” as another power bloc in the final world war. This refers to a united European power that will be led by Germany and influenced by the Vatican. A careful study of Revelation 17 makes this identity clear and provides many vital details about this powerful church-state combine, which is already forming today. Daniel 8:19-24 say the leader of this empire will appear at “the end” of this age, and that he will “destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.” (For proof that the “king of the north” will be a German-led European bloc, please read our free book [The Holy Roman Empire in Prophecy](#).)

Daniel 11:44 mentions a third power bloc that will factor heavily into this global war. It is located to “the east” and “the north” of where these other events take place. In Revelation 16:12, it is called “the kings of the east.” Revelation 9 says it will field an army of 200 million soldiers (verse 16). The Bible provides other details about this largest army assembled in history, including the fact that it will be led by one main country: Russia. A prophecy in Ezekiel 38 says: “And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him” (verses 1-2). Bible scholars normally agree “Gog” is Russia and “the land of Magog” includes China. (For proof of the modern identity of the “kings of the east,” read our free booklet [Russia and China in Prophecy](#).)

The Trigger

Luke 21 records more details from that conversation on the Mount of Olives between Christ and His disciples. In verses 20-22, Christ describes an event that will happen just before the outbreak of the final world war that threatens all human life: “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. ... For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.”

Matthew 24 also describes Jerusalem being surrounded by multiple armies, calling it “the abomination of desolation ... in the holy place” (verse 15).

The prophesied push by Iran against a united Europe discussed in Daniel 11:40 is closely connected to this time when the armies surround Jerusalem.

Mr. Flurry explained this connection in his article [“The Whirlwind Prophecy”](#): “Study Daniel’s prophecy more deeply, and you see Jerusalem right in the middle of it” (*Trumpet*, July 2013).

Mr. Flurry explained that the push by the “king of the south” against the “king of the north” could occur within the city of Jerusalem. “Does it have something to do with radical Islam attacking or controlling a site owned by the Catholics?” he asked. Some of Catholicism’s holiest sites are in Jerusalem, so it is not difficult to imagine how such an event could happen, and how forcefully the Europeans would react to it.

Whatever the details of that “push” turn out to be, the Bible makes plain that it connects to the armies surrounding Jerusalem, and that it will escalate into devastating world war.

So Bible prophecy is clear. It is not Pyongyang or Seoul or any other city that the armies of the world will encompass as they ignite the flames of World War III. It is Jerusalem.

Korea, Armageddon and Beyond

This does not mean that we should be unconcerned about the dangers posed by the regime of Kim Jong-un in North Korea. This nuclear-armed despot has tested intercontinental ballistic missiles believed to be capable of striking the American mainland. And there is nothing in Bible prophecy that says such a strike will *not* take place. Prophecy shows such a scenario will not be the spark that ignites the third world war.

The North Korean danger is graver than most realize, and Pyongyang could inflict major damage on the U.S. or other nations. It is also possible that the U.S. could hazard a preemptive strike. Any such scenario would contribute to the “wars and rumours of wars” that Christ warned would occur before the third world war breaks out. Beyond the direct threat, there is also ample evidence that North Korea is collaborating on nuclear weapons with Iran—the pushy Islamic nation that Bible prophecy says *will* trigger World War III.

Furthermore, North Korea will almost certainly be assimilated into the “kings of the east” power bloc, which is prophesied to play a major role in World War III. This bloc will be led by Russia, with China in a secondary leadership position. Many other Asian nations, likely including North Korea, will be aligned with it (see Ezekiel 38:5-6). This means that all the missiles and nuclear technology that the Kim dynasty has been developing over the years *will* contribute to the unprecedented devastation to occur during the prophesied third world war. Prophecies such as that recorded in Daniel 11:44 show, however, that this will occur toward the *end* of the conflict, not the beginning.

Altogether, this shows that even though North Korea will not be the spark that ignites the world, we should take its threats and actions seriously. As *Trumpet* editors Stephen Flurry and Joel Hilliker wrote on August 15: “If nothing else, the mere threat of a mentally unstable tyrant in North Korea using nuclear weapons *should* cause all of us to be asking some very hard questions. Rising current nuclear tension should provoke us to consider seriously the biblical prophecies of nuclear destruction. Those prophecies are drawing closer than ever to fulfillment!” (theTrumpet.com).

Bible prophecy gives a surprisingly detailed description of World War III and other end-time events, but it does not give every detail.

The Bible assures God’s people, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy,” and says our understanding becomes clearer as we draw closer to Jesus Christ’s return (2 Peter 1:19). God instructs us in Luke 21:36 to be vigilant regarding His prophecies, and to watch for evidence of those prophecies being fulfilled in the headlines each week: “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

The evidence matches what Jesus Christ prophesied and shows that World War III is rapidly approaching.

Yet, as we see that conflict approach, there is cause for great hope! In Matthew 24, Christ says that the global war at the end of this age will be so devastating that it could kill all human life. Then He adds a vital detail in verse 22: “But it will be shortened” (NLT).

World War III will be cut short! Before mankind fires its last weapons to annihilate itself, Jesus Christ will interrupt the conflict. Immediately after that time of unprecedented death and destruction, He will establish a new age of unprecedented peace and prosperity. Christ will rule Earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will usher in an epoch of worldwide peace

for the peoples of the Korean Peninsula, the U.S., the Middle East, Europe, Russia and everywhere else. Regarding this future era of global harmony, Isaiah 2:4 says: “[N]ation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Knowing how close that radiant future is can give us perspective that fills us with hope.

To learn more about the prophetic significance of the North Korea nuclear crisis, read an excerpt of Gerald Flurry’s new booklet, “[Nuclear Armageddon Is ‘At the Door.’](#)” ■

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